SAN FRANCISCO

cINEMATHEQUE

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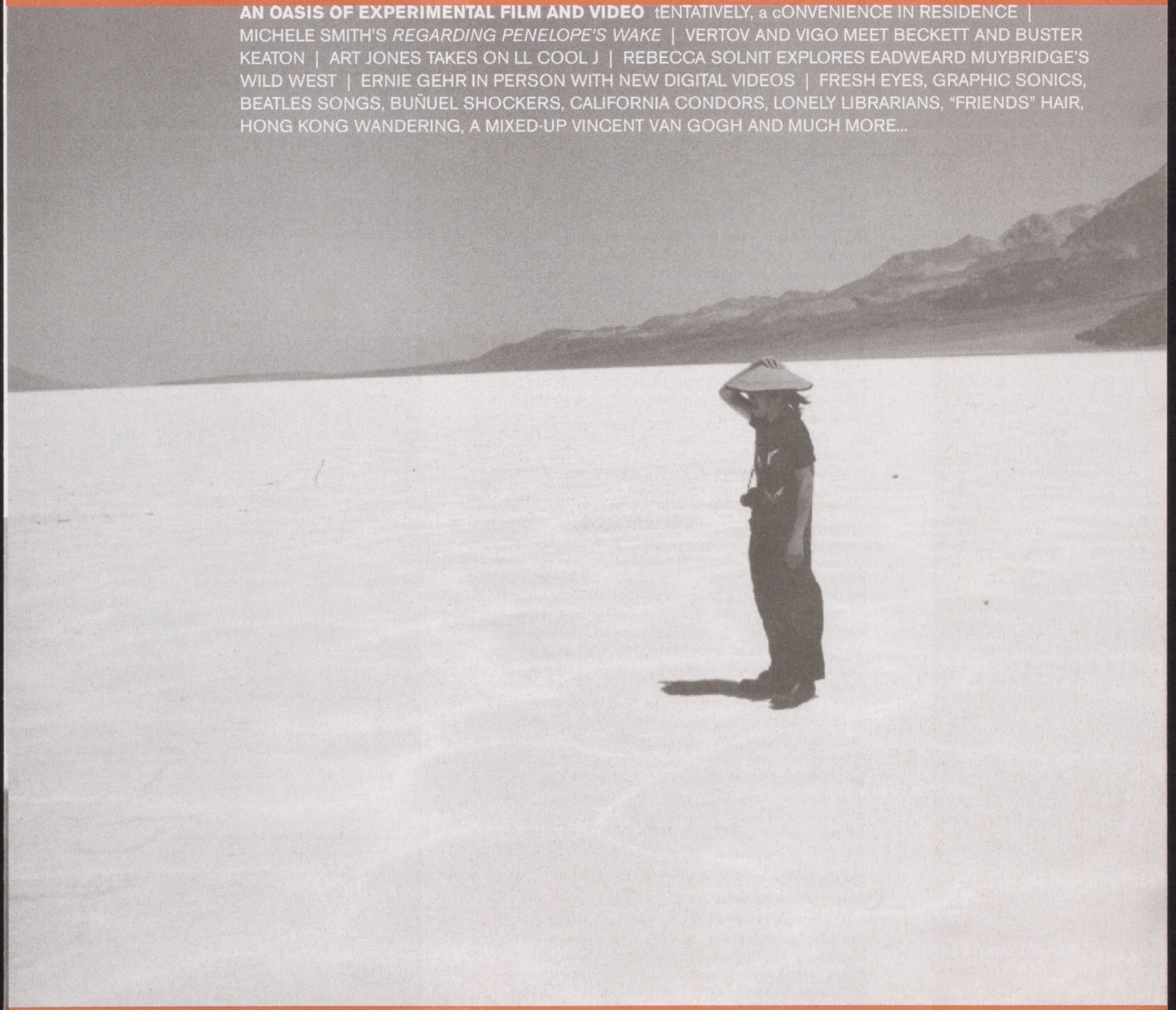

WINTER 2003

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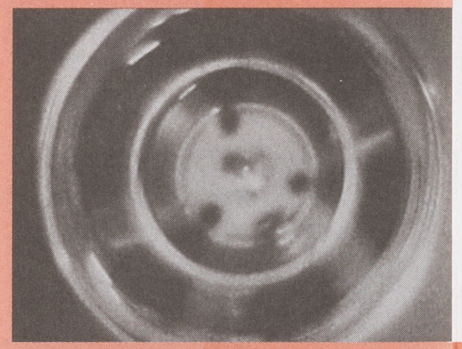

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145 Ninth Street, Suite 240, San Francisco CA 94103

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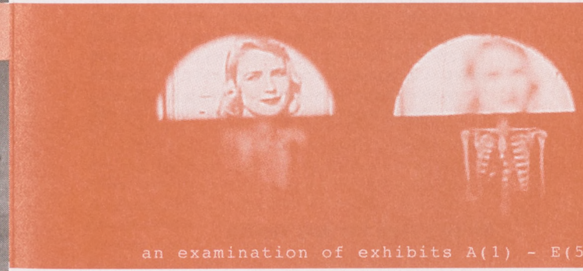

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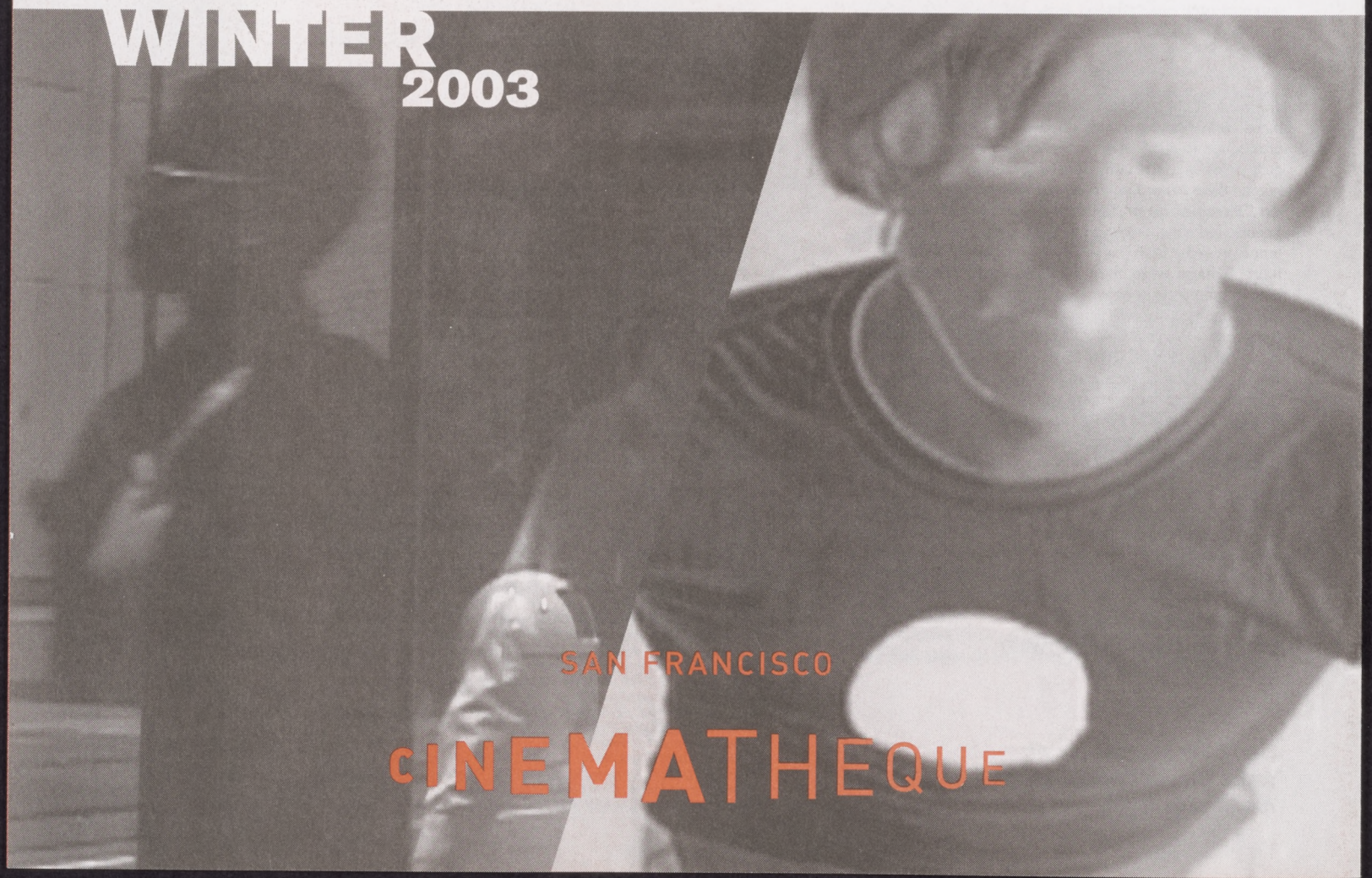
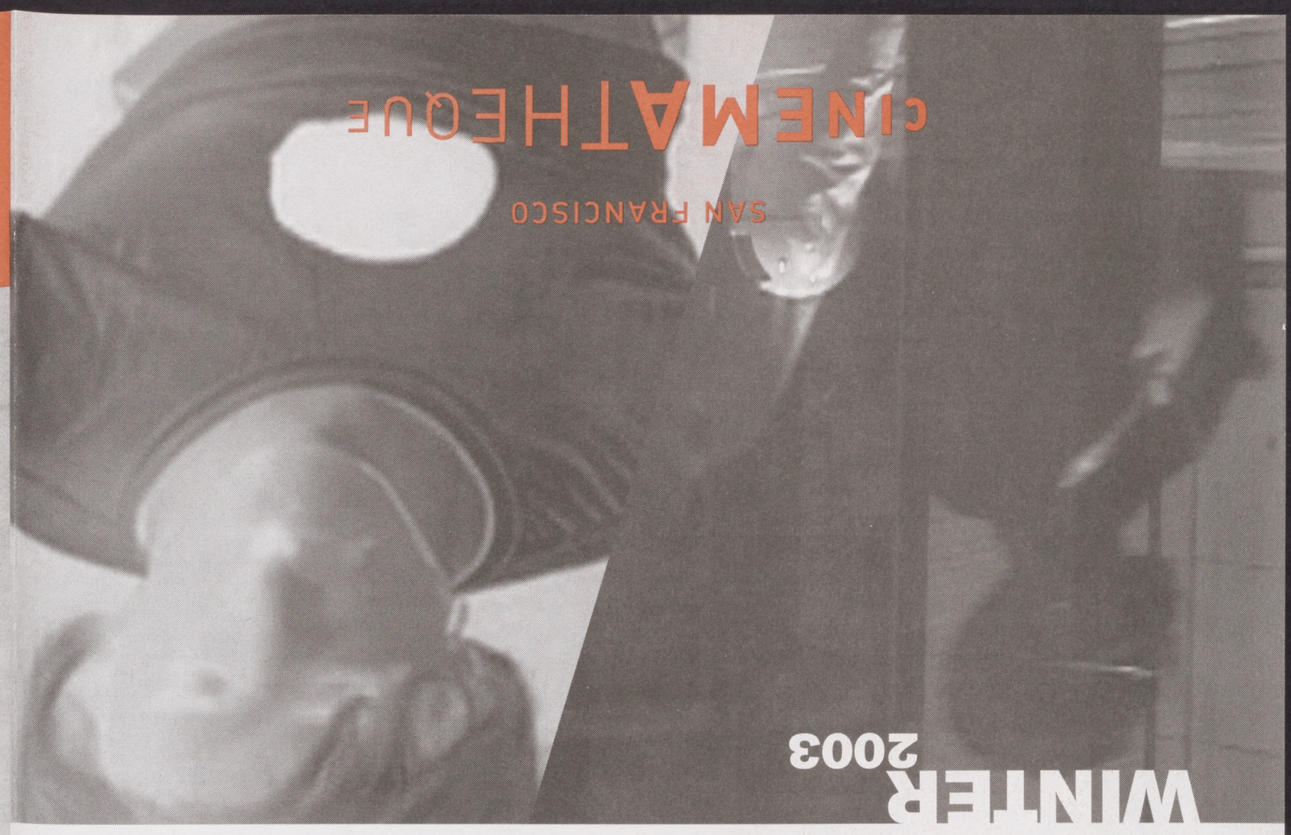
WINTER 2003





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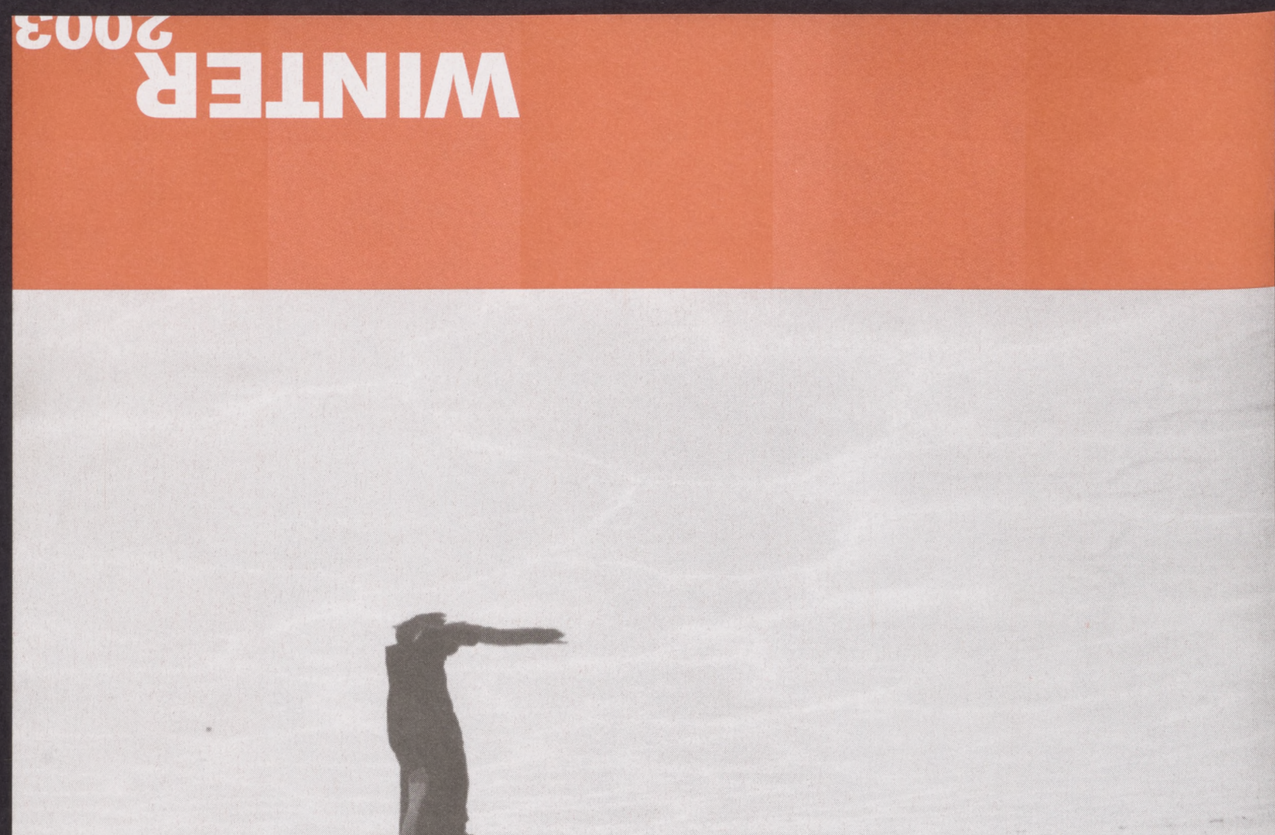

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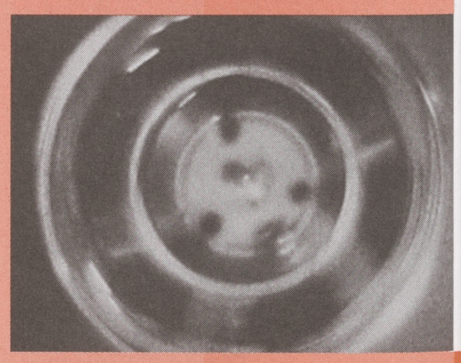

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SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE

EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF MOVING IMAGE EXPRESSION

WINTER 2003

HOME AWAY FROM HOME: CINEMA VISIONARIES IN RESIDENCE

This season, San Francisco Cinematheque kicks off a new series of artist residencies for which film and video makers at the pivotal mid-career stage will visit for a full week of screenings, presentations, workshops and other forms of public discourse. Arriving from national and international locales, these artists will assess their work-to-date in the presence of Bay Area cineastes, with the goal of charting the next step in their creative journey. We're off to a rousing start with a visit from **tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE**. This series is generously supported with grants from National Endowment for the Arts and The Zellerbach Family Foundation.

FRESH EYES: NEW ARTISTS AT CINEMATHEQUE

This season we continue our series of screenings featuring recent works by younger, burgeoning film and video artists, many of whom are appearing with us for the first time. Initiated in Fall 2002, **Fresh Eyes** represents Cinematheque's ongoing commitment to exhibiting, exploring and celebrating the work of new generations of media provocateurs. This series is generously supported with grants from The Bernard Osher Foundation, LEF Foundation and National Endowment for the Arts.

Notes by program curators.

Thursday, February 6 and Sunday, February 9

Classification-Resistant What-Have-Yous
tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE In Residence

Pittsburgh/BalTimOre's one and only tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE, "Criminally Sane Jack-Off-Of-All-Trades," visits Speculative Fiction (that's San Francisco to you and me) for the first time since '98 in his capacities as Sprocket Scientist, Explicator, Proponent of Classification-Resistant What-Have-Yous and SPLEENIUS to present media pranks, subversions and interventions, and to arouse such probing questions as "Aren't you dead yet?" tENT also will pitch his brand-new limited-edition book featuring abstract interviews, confounding essays, odd images and a head-spinning CD. A suitably energized reception will follow the February 9 screening at San Francisco Art Institute. *(Steve Polta)*

Thursday, February 6 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Classification-Resistant What-Have-Yous
Program X: *IMP ACTIVISM*
tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE In Person

tENT tonight presents ***IMP ACTIVISM*** *Issue #3*, a "vaudeo magazine" featuring political activist works intENT upon quasi-documenting secret shoppers for trickster culture while attempting to overthrow the dominant paradigm. Titles include ***Ski Mask News***, ***Undie-Pendance Day***, ***Pretzels for the Suits***, ***The Asshole is a Tense Hole***, ***Nestled Deep..*** (about spiritual ecologist Teddy Carns), ***Contestational Robotics 1998-2000***, ***Teenagers from Inner Space***, ***Evidence of Police Conduct & Misconduct Against May Day Celebrants*** and ***Little Brother Gets Busted***. *(Steve Polta)*

Sunday, February 9 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

Classification-Resistant What-Have-Yous
Program Y: Breakthroughs In Sprocket Science!
tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE In Person

tENT's second screening showcases recent media manipulations and perceptual conundrums including ***In Perplexing Pursuit of the Prodigy Paleontologist*** (a mobius mystery), ***Foiled Again!*** (foil hats as symbols of resistance to mind control), ***Shuffle Mode*** (the philosophical side of permutation), ***Space Ballet (condensed)*** (a surveillance dance), ***Where We're Trailer #2*** (why bother to check out the feature when you can check into the trailer?), ***Lab Rats Explain Their Veggie-Oil Powered Van*** (run your diesel vehicle on fish and chips waste), ***Who is tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE?*** (a "demo reel" from Ken Bye's in-progress documentary about tENT), ***Cuntralia*** (making movies about sexual obsession can be dangerous to one's health) and ***Guitarists Anonymous Withdrawal Aids*** (learn how to break banal habits), a performance work for VCR, filmstrip, slides and (sampled) guitar. Mingle with tENT at a reception following the show. *(Steve Polta)*

Thursday, February 13 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

FRENCH NARRATIVES OF THE 1920s AND '30s
Program One: Marcel L'Herbier does Pirandello
The Late Mathias Pascal

Alongside Delluc, Dulac, Epstein and Gance, L'Herbier was a seminal figure of the French narrative avant-garde, sometimes called Impressionism. ***The Late Mathias Pascal*** is based on Pirandello's 1904 novel of the same name, a story of a librarian who takes advantage of his mistakenly reported suicide to try to free himself from the grief and strictures of his domestic and professional life. "To be dead was to be free" comments an intertitle; but freedom is short-lived, and an identity, once forsaken, is not easily reclaimed. Known for its striking mise-en-scène and startling representations of the main character's hallucinations and disoriented states of mind, this dark but witty tale stars Russian émigré actor Mosjoukine and features sets designed by Cavalcanti and Lazare Meerson. *(Irina Leimbacher)*

Sundays, February 16 and March 2

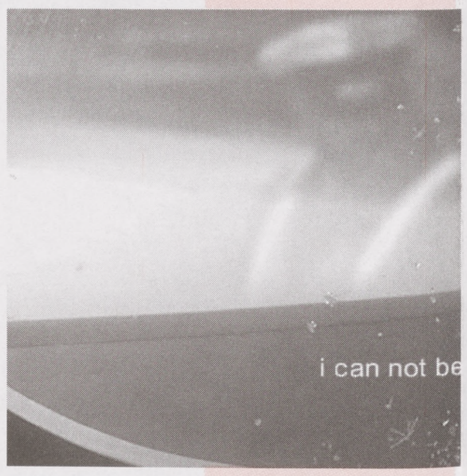
GRAPHIC SONIC: Music Made Cinema

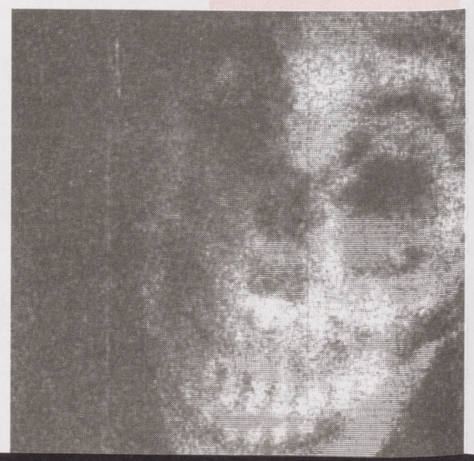
Since the advent of the synchronized sound-image, filmmakers have experimented with the use of sound in movies, producing talkies ("Al Jolson sings!") as well as works of graphic cinema (for which the sound animates the picture). Disparate approaches have yielded different commercial results: *The Jazz Singer* was a hit, *Fantasia* was a flop. Yet the urge to create cinematic montage to music has a long and somewhat hidden lineage, cross-bred into various genres: advertising spots, TV docs, animation, features and experimental films. The fact is that Disney shared this dream of responding to music in images with artists as diverse as Brakhage, Eisenstein and Harold Becker. These two screenings will present an abbreviated survey of historical and recent works in the field of music cinema. *(Konrad Steiner)*

Sunday, February 16 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

GRAPHIC SONIC
Music Made Cinema, Program One

Our two-evening series kicks off with works made to music by an eclectic array of composers including Paul Bowles, Johann Strauss, The Beatles, Ikue Mori and James Tenney. Films include Eisenstein and Alexandrov's ***Romance Sentimentale***, Nathaniel Dorsky's ***Night Waltz***, Dean Smith's ***here we are now***, Robert Attanasio's ***Counterfeit Music Videos nos. 2, 3 and 6***, "Lanky" Stu Bircke's ***Primal Scene***, Abigail Child's ***8 Million***, Charlotte Pryce's ***X*** and Stan Brakhage's ***... (Reel 5)***. *(Konrad Steiner)*





Thursday, February 20 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

FRESH EYES, Program Six
Adventures in Video with Tommy Becker
Tommy Becker In Person

Tommy Becker's videos combine spoken word, performance, music and costume design to create sentimental vignettes in which faceless individuals consistently find themselves in states of adversity. Music, sounds and spoken monologues accentuate Becker's performance-based works, highlighting the humorous yet melancholy states of his characters as they struggle to shift perspectives, overcome alienation or refine behavioral patterns. Choral-like monologues, exaggerated gestures and obscured identities enhance the unearthly realm in which Becker's characters enact their strange scenarios. Melodramatic scenes unfold in empty sets or against single-colored backdrops that place emphasis on physical movement, color, composition and sound. This screening, Becker's first with Cinematheque, includes recent works such as ***bartholin–part 1***, ***newfound freedom***, ***aisheteru means i love you*** and ***walden***. Becker also will present a performance piece. *(Total Mobile Home)*

Sunday, February 23 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

FRESH EYES, Program Seven
Michele Smith's *Regarding Penelope's Wake*
Michele Smith In Person

Michele Smith's two-hour silent epic ***Regarding Penelope's Wake*** is an obsessively edited collage/montage/hand-painted/ripped/cut/etched/scratched elaboration of found footage culled from numerous sources, including a 1970s public-speaking instructional film, *Themes from the Odyssey*, 8mm stag films, *Self Protection for Women*, a biography of Vincent Van Gogh, ethnographic documentaries, science films, home movies, *The Frog Prince*, a film about underwater sound, and many other educational oddities. Derived as much from James Joyce as from Homer, this highly abstracted telling of Ulysses' fabled odyssey weaves through multiple experimental narratives, visual rhymes, structural disruptions, rhythmic couplings, reckless visual puns, carefully balanced counterpoints of light and shadow, and delirious punctuations of movement and color. Consisting of hundreds of clips from 16mm and 8mm films, Smith's opus is presented on digital video. *(Scott Stark)*

Sunday, March 2 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

GRAPHIC SONIC
Music Made Cinema, Program Two

Our second evening of music-inspired cinema features work made to music by a diverse group of composers including Arthur Honegger, Richard Wagner and Charlemagne Palestine. Films include Jean Mitry's ***Pacific 231***, Aaron Ross' ***PSEKELIS***, Gariné Torossian's ***Sparklehorse***, Konrad Steiner's ***Devil Egged***, Gordon Avil's ***Master Hands***, Len Lye's ***Rhythm*** and ***Free Radicals***, Joyce Wieland's ***1933***, Harold Becker's ***Blind Gary Davis*** and Pip Chodorov's ***Charlemagne 2: Piltzer***. *(Konrad Steiner)*

Thursday, March 6 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

DOCS ON DOCS, Program One
Evgeny Tsymbal's *Dziga and His Brothers*
with Vertov, Vigo and Beckett shorts

This new Russian documentary, in its Bay Area premiere, examines the lives and works of the three Kaufman brothers: David (known as Dziga Vertov), Mikhail (who shot most of Vertov's films through *Man with a Movie Camera* and became a filmmaker in his own right) and Boris (who emigrated first to France, then to the U.S., and is known for his cinematography for Vigo, Kazan and Lumet). Including rare archival images of the three brothers and clips from their respective works, this documentary explores their Polish-Jewish family history, the personal and aesthetic divergences between Vertov and Mikhail after 1928, and their relationships with Boris. It will be accompanied by Vertov's ***Kino Pravda*** from 1922 and two shorts shot by Boris: Jean Vigo's ***Taris*** (1931) and Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider's ***Film*** (1965, starring Buster Keaton). *(Irina Leimbacher)*

Sunday, March 9 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

FRESH EYES, Program Eight
"Mama Said Knock You Out One More Time": The Media Manipulations of Art Jones
Art Jones In Person

Art Jones' provocative music videos, documentaries on hip-hop history, and VJ collaborations with Soundlab, DJ Spooky and Anti-Pop Consortium all question the powers and politics invested in pop culture. From his work as a member of Not Channel Zero in the early '90s to digital cross-pollinations with the new media collective ITEL, Jones challenges stale academic critiques of American commodity culture. Screening tonight are his digital music video trilogy ***Love Song #1*** and ***Making the Video/Mama Said Knock You Out One More Time***, an exploration of the making of media(ted) race and gender identities featuring LL Cool J. Jones also will present the world premiere of ***711***, an experimental documentary made during a residency in Hong Kong. A live VJ performance by Jones will culminate the evening. *(Maïa Cybelle Carpenter)*

Thursday, March 13 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

FRESH EYES, Program Nine
Post-Industrial Speculations: Gibbs Chapman and James T. Hong
Gibbs Chapman and James T. Hong In Person

The work of Gibbs Chapman and James T. Hong combines elements of personal documentary and industrial production to suggest entropic endgame scenarios, ironically pointing to the untenable lengths reached by the human drive toward complexity and rationality. Chapman's ***An Examination of Exhibits A(1)–E(5)*** composites a pseudo-industrial essay on what he calls "the human insistence on order from chaos" through bizarrely collaged found footage, while ***Your Tax Dollars at Work*** exposes hidden meanings in scrambled congressional news coverage. Chapman also will premiere ***Turbine's Russian Scissors***. Hong's ***BEHOLD THE ASIAN: HOW ONE BECOMES WHAT ONE IS*** stands as an aggressive treatise on identity, race and conformity; in his words, "Identity politics for everyone and no one." Hong's earlier ***CONDOR: A FILM FROM CALIFORNIA*** is a quasi-existential meditation on the extinction of the California Condor as a metaphor of our time. *(Total Mobile Home)*

Sunday screenings at:
San Francisco Art Institute
800 Chestnut Street

Thursday screenings at:
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission Street

Sunday, March 16 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West
An Illustrated Talk, Book Signing and Reception with Rebecca Solnit

In celebration of her new book ***River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West***, renowned Bay Area author Rebecca Solnit (*As Eve Said to the Serpent*, *Wanderlust*) will give a copiously illustrated talk linking Muybridge's work as a photographer–his fascination with serial and sequential images, with freezing and exploring time–to the technological involvements of his patron Leland Stanford, builder of the transcontinental railroad and founder of the university that gestated Silicon Valley. Citing a scandalous, previously unpublished first-person account, Solnit suggests that the breakthrough leading to cinema took place in San Francisco itself (as did Muybridge's first public screening of his animated photographic images). "This book," Solnit says, "is a genesis story for Hollywood and Silicon Valley, for the way that California has generated the forces that changed the world." Following her lecture, Solnit will sign copies of her book (available for purchase this evening) and join us for an informal reception. *(Irina Leimbacher)*

Thursday, March 20 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

DOCS ON DOCS, Program Two:
Ramón Gieling's *The Prisoners of Buñuel*
with two Buñuel classics

In its Bay Area premiere, Gieling's ***The Prisoners of Buñuel*** takes us back to Las Hurdes, the isolated region of Spain where Luis Buñuel shot his controversial documentary ***Land Without Bread*** in 1932. Banned in Republican Spain, censored in Britain and used as an anti-Fascist propaganda tool in France, Buñuel's film has been subject to various readings. Gieling's projection of the film in a local village square in 1999 elicits the inhabitants' reactions both to the film and to the perceived depiction of their region as a kind of hell on earth, encouraging us to consider the political and moral implications of representational practices. The documentary will be accompanied by Buñuel and Dali's first surrealist short–the still-shocking ***Un Chien Andalou***–and the American voiceover version of *Land Without Bread*. *(Irina Leimbacher)*

Thursday, March 27 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

FRESH EYES, Program Ten
Psychogenre Re-visions: New Work by Bobby Abate
Bobby Abate In Person

Bobby Abate's recent work forges radical paths of queer desire and genre criticism through film, video and the internet. Tonight, for his first appearance at Cinematheque, Abate arrives from New York City with a scintillating suitcase of vital new work. Abate's 16mm films ***The Tanti Man***, ***The Zero Order*** and ***Chisholm*** invoke Kenneth Anger-esque horny montage fantasies of personal psychodrama and popular culture syncopated to nostalgic tunes. ***One Mile Per Minute*** is, in Abate's words, "a look at the generation of the 'culture jammed' consumer preened with 'Friends' hair, 'Survivor' courage and CNN awareness." Abate's ***Real Videos*** log on to "the breakdown of identity, communication and human relationships via the internet." *(Total Mobile Home)*

Thursday, April 3 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

FRESH EYES, Program Eleven
Delicate Meditations: Films by Karen Johannesen and Sheri Wills
Karen Johannesen and Sheri Wills In Person

Providence-based Sheri Wills and San Francisco-based Karen Johannesen work intimately with self-processing, photogramming and other direct techniques to create impressionistic films of subtle color and fleeting, soft gesture. Wills' films–including ***Fever***, ***Acetylene***, ***specimens 28 to 42***, ***Anodyne***, ***Effigy: specimens 4 to 12***, ***Elegeia***, ***Nocturne Nos. 1&2***, ***Palliation***, ***Riderless*** and ***H'un (Lacerations)***–are lush, flower-like works made with a Victorian attention to intimate detail and obsessive ornamentation, accompanied by hauntingly minimal and evocative soundtracks. Similarly delicate, Johannesen's films focus particular attention on texture and small detail, resulting in works that subtly merge their photographic subjects with their filmic surfaces into fields of deep, quiet mystery and beauty. Johannesen will screen ***76 Station***, ***Algonquin Winter*** (both small-gauge landscape studies), ***RMF #2*** and a recently completed series of abstract photogrammed films. *(Steve Polta)*

Sunday, April 6 at 7:30 pm
San Francisco Art Institute

Shadows of Time: New Work by Ernie Gehr
Ernie Gehr In Person

Cinematheque is proud to present the West Coast premieres of two new digital video works by master film artist Ernie Gehr. Gehr describes ***Glider*** as "cool, delirious and mysterious. Futuristic, yet ancient. A voyage into a pictorial space-world that seems to be governed by extraterrestrial optical and gravitational laws." ***City***, he says, is "grounded in the familiar everyday world of the street. Yet, the ground often gives way plastically, opening up a dense and paradoxical field for visual musings and delight as colors, solids and transparencies as well as spaces within spaces weave a tapestry of a somewhat familiar 'city.' Though recorded in a specific location (downtown San Francisco), the anonymity of the spaces and architecture transposes and shapes them into a portrait of a mid-size downtown, anywhere USA." *(Scott Stark)*

Thursday, April 10 at 7:30 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

FRENCH NARRATIVES OF THE 1920s AND '30s
Program Two: The Epsteins
Jean Epstein's *The Three-Paneled Mirror* and Marie Epstein's *Children of Montmartre*

One of the most prolific filmmakers from the 1920s through the '40s, Jean Epstein is renowned for his critical writings on film, his avant-garde narrative work and his quasi-documentary explorations of rural life in coastal Brittany. His sister Marie, who collaborated with him on a number of scripts and also directed her own films, is much less well-known. Here we pair one of Jean's films, ***The Three-Paneled Mirror*** *(La Glace à Trois Faces)*, a tale of a spoiled young man as seen through the very different visions of his three lovers, with one of Marie's: ***Children of Montmartre*** *(La Maternelle)* is a poetic-realist social drama of children in Paris' urban ghetto, based on months of research and cast mostly with amateurs. *(Irina Leimbacher)*

Images: **Front cover:** James T. Hong, *BEHOLD THE ASIAN: HOW ONE BECOMES WHAT ONE IS* **Back cover, left:** Ernie Gehr, *City*; **right:** Tommy Becker, *newfound freedom* **Page 2, top:** tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE, *Bob Cobbing/Movie Trivia/Hypnopedagogy*; **middle and bottom:** James T. Hong, *BEHOLD THE ASIAN: HOW ONE BECOMES WHAT ONE IS* **Page 3:** Gibbs Chapman, *An Examination of Exhibits A(1)-E(5)* **Facing page, top to bottom:** tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE as the "Anarkian usician," photo: Heather Mull; Michele Smith, *Regarding Penelope's Wake*; photo by Eadweard Muybridge; Abigail Child, *8 Million*; Art Jones, *Love Song #1*; Konrad Steiner, *Devil Egged* **This page, top to bottom:** Dziga Vertov from Evgeny Tsymbal's *Dziga and His Brothers*; Tommy Becker, *I Can Be Happy Trapped in a Living Room With a Rabbit That Has No Eyes*; James T. Hong, *BEHOLD THE ASIAN: HOW ONE BECOMES WHAT ONE IS*; Gibbs Chapman, *An Examination of Exhibits A(1)-E(5)*; Gibbs Chapman, *An Examination of Exhibits A(1)-E(5)*; Michele Smith, *Regarding Penelope's Wake*; James T. Hong, *CONDOR: A FILM FROM CALIFORNIA*; Michele Smith, *Regarding Penelope's Wake*; James T. Hong, *BEHOLD THE ASIAN: HOW ONE BECOMES WHAT ONE IS*; Robert Attanasio, *Counterfeit Music Video: Found Photograph*; Art Jones, *#FFFFFF*; Gibbs Chapman, *Meet the Thinking Fellers;* Konrad Steiner, *Devil Egged*; James T. Hong, *CONDOR: A FILM FROM CALIFORNIA*; Sheri Wills, *Effigy: specimens 4 to 12*